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roamalert_pa_int@staffalert.pa.gov[roamalert_pa_int@staffalert.pa.gov]
From: PEMA SEOC OPERATIONS
Sent: Wed 6/10/2015 12:41:44 PM
Subject: 20150608-0005 - UPDATE - COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE FIRE/ WATER SUPPLY AND CONTAMINATION ISSUES - Adams County, 6/8/15

7:40 a.m., 6/10/15 - York County is reporting a large amount of waste including residual "foam" from the firefighting at Miller Chemical was observed on the Conewago Creek at the dam west of the SR 234 bridge just west of East Berlin line in Reading Township, Adams County. The coordinates of this location are: 39.939797, -76.989385. Adams County Fish and Game are currently on scene advising there is a fish kill visible in the area. Water testing is underway. The Conewago Creek enters Washington Township, York County just east of East Berlin. This situation was also reported in NRC Report #1119259. - wst

7:24 p.m., 6/9/15 - DEP provided the following status update: As of approximately 12 pm today (6/9/15) firefighting activities at Miller Chemical and Fertilizer were stopped and the facility was turned over to company for their insurance personnel to inspect the site and prepare for demolition. Environmental Products and Services has been onsite since yesterday, 6/8/15, attempting to collect as much runoff water as possible. Estimates from Hanover Borough water say that approximately 3.8 million gallons of water was used during the firefighting operations. EP & S has been able to collect approximately 250,000 gallons. The rest of that water traveled just over ½ mile through drainage swales and farm fields ditches and entered or is in the process of entering an Unnamed Tributary to the South Branch of the Conewago locally referred to as 'Slagle's Run'. The runoff water is very visible and is colored dark purple to brown/black in the water. Two water intakes are affected by the runoff. One, in Slagel's Run, is a backup, secondary, intake used by Hanover Borough, the intake has not been used since it was exercised in April and it is not anticipated to be needed until August. The valves to the pump station are closed to prevent any back flow from entering and potentially contaminating the intake. The second, in the South Branch of the Conewago, is the main source of drinking water for the New Oxford Municipal Authority (NOMA). That intake was closed as of 08:35 on 6/8/15 and is not believed to be impacted by the runoff. An emergency sample kit was used in the clear well of the water plant and preliminary results from the DEP laboratory indicate that it was not impacted. New Oxford Municipal Authority does have an interconnection with the York Water Company which was installed to provide a back up to the water intake in the event it was unusable, such as now. That interconnection is capable of providing 576,000 gallons of water per day to NOMA. The current usage by NOMA is approximately 700,000 gallons per day. The difference is currently being made up with water from NOMA's storage tanks. At approximately 10:30 on 6/9/15 NOMA issued mandatory water restrictions asking for residents and business to reduce their water usage (similar to what would be in place during a drought). NOMA also informed the Department on 6/9/15 that they had between 2 and 3 days of storage left in their tanks at their current usage. Alternatives are being explored with the York Water Company for them to provide NOMA with additional water however, they are being limited by the infrastructure

currently in place in the NOMA system, specifically the size of the pipes and their ability to take additional pressure without causing a water main break. York Water and NOMA are working through those issues and DEP anticipates receiving an update from them on 6/10/15. Other potential alternatives being explored, such as trucking water and/or reducing or cutting flows to commercial and industrial customers, however they are likely worse case scenario's. An emergency sample kit was used at Slagel's Run on 6/8/15. The preliminary results are consistent with runoff from a chemical and fertilizer fire ie: elevated levels of nutrients and metals as well as some herbicides, volatile organic compounds and very high Total Organic Carbon. The samples results showed concentrations which are above Maximum Contaminant Levels and are not able to be removed by the NOMA filter plant essentially making the water intake and plant useless until contamination has passed by the plant. At this point in time there is no time table for that to happen as it is going to be dependent on the flow through the swale and ditches. There are also concerns that the contaminants are in the soil in the swales and ditches and that even when dry they may continue to flow into Slagel's Run during rain events. DEP has been in contact with Miller Chemical and Fertilizer as well as their pollution prevention contractor hired by their insurance company. Both the company and the contractor have been made aware of the impacts to the water systems and the need to eliminate the flow of the contaminants into Slagel's Run. As of 18:35 on 6/9/15 they are trying to dam the swales with sand in an attempt to filter the runoff as well as pump as much as possible out. They are also looking to try and divert the runoff into a field as opposed to Slagel's Run and are working with nearby property owners. Additionally, they have discussed scraping and removing the contaminated soil from the swales and ditches. A meeting/conference call between Southcentral Regional Staff, Adams County EMA, EPA On Scene Coordinators Office and Miller Chemical and Fertilizer is anticipated to take place tomorrow, 6/10/15, in the morning to discuss cleanup plans proposed by the consultants. (The EPA on scene coordinators office has been briefed on the situation in the event the incident has long term implications and additional assistance is needed.) The main summary is that until the contamination stops flowing into Slagel's Run and the contaminants are reduced in the South Branch of the Conewago the intake for NOMA (and Hannover Borough) is unable to be used. The potential for long term impacts from rain events continuing to wash contaminants into Slagel's Run is also a concern however in my initial discussions with Miller Chemical and Fertilizer and their consultants they seem to understand the potential impacts to NOMA and are willing to do what is necessary to alleviate the issue. Following the meeting with Miller Chemical and Fertilizer and talk with NOMA and York water and additional update will be provided. DEP does not anticipate having something concrete until tomorrow afternoon at the earliest. - wst

7:22 p.m., 6/9/15 - Adams County/Craig advised fire units returned for a hot spot at Miller Chemical that is near a polymer tank. The county will advised when the units return to surface. - wst

1:26 a.m. - 6/9/15 - Power was restored to all customers. Per the county this incident is closed. - SBD

4:00 p.m. - All precautionary measures recommended in response to the fire at Miller Chemical in Conewago Township, Adams County, are lifted. Firefighters for several hours had allowed the fire to continue as a controlled burn while evaluating conditions and implementing plans to

potentially resume active firefighting and extinguish the blaze. Active firefighting resumed at approximately 2 p.m. after crews had created a retention pond used to capture water from firefighting activities and minimize any potential environmental impact. Vacuum tanker trucks and storage tanks were brought in to remove and store the water to maintain as much capacity as possible in the retention pond. A Pennsylvania State Police fire marshal is on scene to investigate the cause of the fire. ~ jlr

1:50 p.m. – Currently the incident at standstill, no water is being put on fire. The Incident Commander is very concerned regarding the forecast and possible water runoff/additional unwanted water on facility. A retention pond is being dug at this time; some run off did make it off site into feeder creeks which feed into Conewago Creek. The water intakes are closed for Oxford and New Oxford. The County EMC stated Oxford has a water tank, unknown gallons or how much they have on hand. American Water is assisting the township. County EMC stated they are unsure about possible well contamination. The shelter in place is voluntary at this time. No unmet needs reported at this time. ~ jlr

11:50 a.m. - Shelter in place remains. Fire guys working on building runoff retention pond. The on-scene EM requested the water authority to shut down the Oxford Water Intake - at this time, it is unknown how this will affect their operations and how many customers will be affected. Air quality okay and the Hanover Hospital and other critical care facilities are outside the air quality monitoring area. The Mennonite Elementary School is closed due to it being in the immediate area of the incident, and the Utz Potato Chip Plant is also closed. ~ jlr

7:23 a.m. - York and Cumberland County HAZMAT teams are assisting with the fire. The smoke and chemicals at the site are reported to be non-toxic. The shelter in place order remains in effect. Businesses and schools in the affected area will be closed. There are no unmet needs. DM

5:11 a.m. - A shelter in place order has been issued for the area north of W Elm Avenue. DM

4:14 a.m. - A two alarm fire has been reported at Miller Chemical & Fertilizer at 120 Radio Road in Conewago Township. This is a SARA facility with pesticides and agricultural chemicals on the premises. The Township and County EMA's and the County HAZMAT team are en route. DM

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